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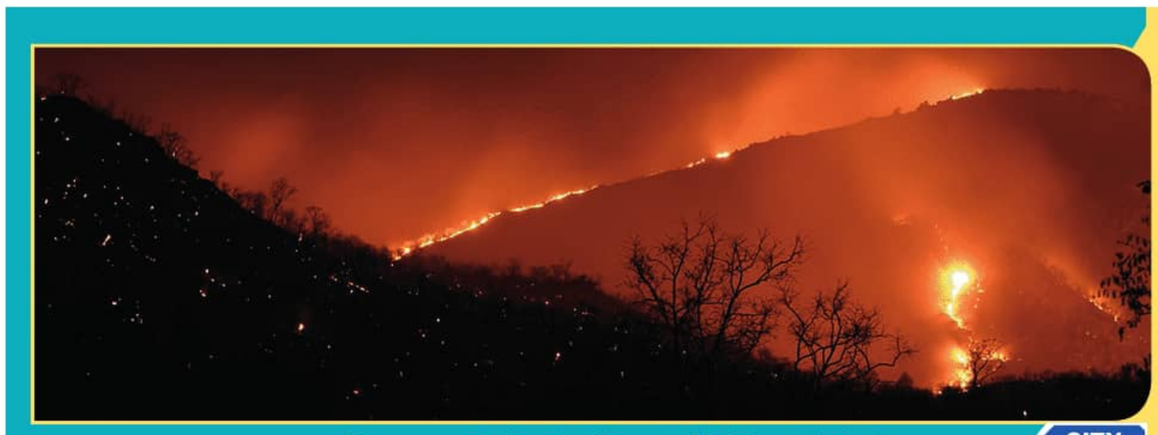
Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 30 | Min 15 | Humidity 80% Partly sunny sky Sensex 83,570 | Nifty 25,694 | Gold 1,43,780 | Silver 2,95,000 | Dollar 90.86 | Euro 105.65 | GBP 121.31

CITY PAGE 3

Balloon bust As R-Day approaches, experts urge shift in decorative choices, warning that balloons pose serious safety risks and cause environmental damage



Fire alarm Dry season is keeping forest officials on their toes as 1,056 fire alerts recorded between Jan 1 and 15, a figure that is higher than same period in 2 previous years

CITY PAGE 4

Bengaluru accounts for major chunk of narcotics-related cases in K'taka; 5,114 FIRs registered between 2023 and 2025 — and figures show that peddlers prefer two-wheelers to ferry around contraband faster and undetected

FAST AND SPURIOUS

Agility, speed, low visibility of bikes make them ideal for navigating city's dense streets

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Bengaluru's staggering two-wheeler density seems to have another unexpected dark fallout, with motorcycles emerging as a startling vehicle of choice for narcotics peddlers, ferrying illegal drugs through the city at an alarming speed. Over the past three years, Bengaluru has emerged as the epicentre of NDPS (Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances) offences in Karnataka, reporting 5,114 FIRs between 2023 and 2025. In 2023 alone, 3,495 cases were recorded, forming more than half of the state's total 6,768 cases, followed by 520 in 2024 and 1,099 in 2025.

As per the latest data, two-wheelers have clearly overtaken cars as the vehicle of choice for traffickers. In 2025, Bengaluru saw 46 cases linked to motorcycles, compared with 18 involving cars and two involving other vehicles. Across three years, motorcycles accounted for 126 cases, cars for 151, and other vehicles for 18, making Bengaluru responsible for roughly 30% of all vehicle-linked NDPS cases in Karnataka. The agility, speed, and low visibility of bikes make them ideal for navigating the city's dense streets, a fact exploited by offenders.

Other urban centres recorded far fewer incidents. Mysuru reported 62 cases in 2023, 43 in 2024, and 422 in 2025. Mangaluru recorded 713, 1,114, and 634 cases across the same years, while Hubballi-Dharwad, Shivamogga, and other

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

"The rise of motorcycles as trafficking tools shows a shift in the modus operandi of offenders; smaller, faster vehicles make detection harder for law enforcement. The city's sprawling roads, traffic congestion, and high population density make policing a complex challenge

—Police official

CLEAR THE AIR

Bengaluru used over ₹427 cr to tackle air pollution towards development, beautification of parks, junction improvements, last-mile connectivity

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As per the data from the Forest, Environment and Climate Change (FECC) Cell of Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), Bengaluru so far has utilised Rs 427.43 crore under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) to tackle air pollution in Bengaluru.

This is out of the total Rs 535.1 crore released by the central ministry under the 15th Finance Commission grants.

According to the department, the fund has been utilised for air pollution mitigation initiatives. Major works undertaken through these grants included the development and beautification of parks, nurseries, and Miyawaki forests, junction improvements, and the development of last-mile connectivity.

Road improvement works and installation of water fountains at strategic locations were also carried out to improve the urban environment.

Further, 80 percent of the funds already utilised were also diverted for the creation of Non-Motorised

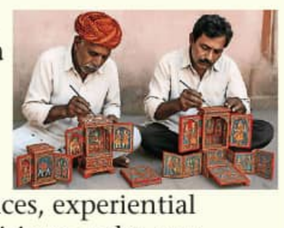
CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Soulful serenade

Faheem Abdullah, the Kashmiri singer-songwriter behind deeply resonant tracks like Saiyaara, Ishq, Ehsaas, and Sajde, whose music has quietly become the soundtrack to longing, love, and introspection for a new generation, is set to perform in a Valentine's Day concert. **Where: Bhartiya Mall of Bengaluru; When: February 14, 7.30 pm**

02 Crafted to perfection



Karigar Bazaar returns with its 2nd Edition, promising a larger and more immersive celebration of India's craft, culture, and community, bringing together master artisans, cultural performances, experiential workshops, and regional cuisines under one heritage destination. **Where: Jayamahal Palace Hotel; When: Until January 26, 11 am to 8 pm**

03 Epic retold

Pratibimb Theatre Company brings its play God's Lioness to Bengaluru this January after shows in Delhi and Gurugram. The 80-minute production retells the story of Mahabharata from Draupadi's perspective, focusing on choice and inner conflict. **Where: Ranga Shankara on Jan 23, Jagriti Theatre on Jan 24 & MAHE on January 29**

04 Musical journey

This season, Banyan Tree Events marks a special milestone as their flagship festival, TCS Ruhaniyat – Seeking the Divine, completes 25 glorious years. More than a festival, Ruhaniyat is a soulful journey through the verses of mystics and saints, carried forward by extraordinary artists from across India and beyond. **Where: Jayamahal Palace Hotel; When: January 24, 6.15 pm**

05 Contemporary traditions

As part of a series of events curated by BLR Hubba, NGMA Bengaluru is hosting Dhwani Roopa, an exploration of Sri Lankan Kandyan dance. Reimagined through contemporary form, Dhwani Roopa journeys from purification to integration through powerful drumming and embodied ritual. **Where: National Gallery of Modern Art, Palace Road; When: January 20, 8 pm**

Credentials under question in environment panel selections

Concerns emerge over candidates nominated to be part of environmental regulatory bodies lacking educational background, qualification or expert experience prescribed as per norms

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Purpose of establishing SEIAA and SEAC to undertake environmental impact assessments and evaluate projects for environmental clearance may be jeopardised without qualified members

The recent nominations to the State-level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) and the State-level Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) in Karnataka suggest that those at the helm are overlooking the mandate to appoint members with the requisite qualifications and expertise, as laid down in the Environment Impact Assessment Notification of 2006 and its subsequent amendments.

Except for a few members, including the chairpersons of SEAC and SEIAA and select individuals, concerns have been raised that many nominees may not fully meet the qualifications required under the Environment Impact Assessment norms. It is alleged that the selection process appears to have overlooked several candidates with relevant expertise, raising questions about adherence to established provisions.

According to documents available with Bangalore Mirror, over 140 applications were received by the Department of Ecology and Environment. If the recent selections to the committee and authority are any indication, the list of candidates appears to have been finalised on the basis of recommendations sent to the concerned department. Questions remain, however, about how certain members were chosen or nominated, particularly with regard to the certificates submitted by applicants. A cursory examination of these certificates reveals their lack of authenticity, as many appear to be fabricated or issued by unrecognised, unregistered, and unaffiliated institutions that exist only on paper.

Selection process allegedly overlooked several candidates with relevant expertise, raising questions about adherence to established provisions

On December 4, 2023, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change returned the list of nominees to the state government, seeking verification of the qualification and experience certificates submitted by the candidates. However, the state government allegedly resubmitted the same list of names to the Ministry.

Commenting on the selection of candidates based on fake certificates, Dr AN Yallappa Reddy, Secretary of Ecology and Environment Department (Retd), Government of Karnataka, observed that the authorities had chosen several members for SEIAA and SEAC who may not have fully met the prescribed qualifications, giving the impression that the state lacks suitably experienced and qualified individuals. "It seems the authorities purposefully selected or nominated these people with vested interest. The authorities want to have control on these members. It will be easy for them to have their work done by selecting people with no qualifications," opined Dr Reddy.

Notably, several candidates lacked the educational background, qualification or expert experience prescribed as per the norms. Expressing concern over the selection of unqualified people, Dr D Paramesha Naik, President of Environmental Society of India, said the purpose of establishing SEIAA and SEAC is to inspect, verify and appraise the documents submitted for environmental clearance. "What is the use if the state government is not able to select qualified people for SEIAA and SEAC, Karnataka. It is better to send all applications directly to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change for the environmental clearance as per the Environment Impact Assessment Notification of 2006," he said.

Education Department clamps down on paper leak risks

Cracking down after reports of question paper images being leaked, the Department of Pre-University Education has issued strict guidelines for the second PU preparatory examinations scheduled from January 19 to February 2. In a clear warning to private and aided colleges, the department has said that any leak of question papers will invite tough action, including withdrawal of grants and even cancellation of institutional recognition. Colleges have been directed to ensure absolute confidentiality, with principals instructed to collect question papers from nodal centres only on the morning of the exam, and not a day earlier. Question papers must be opened in front of students, and any violation will make the concerned college solely responsible.

An official said, "District deputy directors have been told to identify authorised printing presses in advance and ensure that no private printing activity takes place once question paper printing begins. Extra printed copies and soft copies must be destroyed immediately after printing. Only government PU colleges will function as nodal centres, with mandatory CCTV coverage and secure, sealed storage rooms."

The department has also warned students against circulating question papers on WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube or any other platform, saying legal action will follow violations. If a leak originates from a nodal centre, the principal will face action under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Information Technology Act and the Karnataka Education Act. If the examination centre itself is found responsible, the department will recommend its cancellation to the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board. **— BMB**

Employees warn of statewide strike over pension row

State government employees have threatened a Karnataka bandh if the State fails to scrap the National Pension Scheme and implement the Old Pension Scheme. CS Shadakshari, State President of the Karnataka State Government Employees' Association, said repeated agitations for OPS had brought no results, forcing employees to step up their protest. Shadakshari said employees should not be deterred by threats of arrest, suspension or dismissal, asserting that the movement would continue with greater intensity. He called for a statewide shutdown so that intelligence agencies would report to the Chief Minister that no government employee had reported for duty, and urged district and taluk leaders to ensure full participation, citing employees' future and livelihood as the key concern. **— BMB**

Voluntary retirement subject to employer's consideration and approval

The Karnataka High Court has ruled that merely submitting an application for voluntary retirement does not create an automatic right for an employee to exit service. The court emphasised that such requests are subject to approval and that the employer retains the discretion to accept or reject them based on relevant factors.

The observation was made while dismissing a petition filed by a Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) employee who had sought voluntary retirement after several years of service. The employee challenged the corporation's decision to reject his request, arguing that his application ought to have been accepted once it was formally submitted. Upholding the corporation's decision, the court held that an employer is justified in refusing voluntary retirement if the circumstances warrant such rejection. The judgment underlined that courts will not interfere with such decisions unless they are shown to be arbitrary or illegal. The ruling reinforces the principle that voluntary retirement is a conditional process and not an automatic outcome. **— BMB**

Rethinking festivities with safer, greener options

Experts and citizen groups urge adoption of eco-friendly alternatives for festive decor, while highlighting safety and environmental concerns associated with balloons

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A recent helium cylinder blast near the main entrance of Mysuru Palace left several tourists injured, including one from Bengaluru, and has reignited concerns over the hidden risks of balloon use during public celebrations. With Republic Day festivities approaching and for year round celebrations, sustainability experts and citizen groups are urging a rethink of decorative practices, warning that balloons not only pose serious safety risks but also cause lasting environmental harm.

In response, campaigners behind the #NoBalloonsPlease movement have intensified outreach efforts across Bengaluru and other cities. The initiative is actively engaging resident welfare associations (RWAs), schools, shop owners, and community groups, while also submitting letters to authorities appealing for a complete avoidance of balloons during celebrations. The campaign stresses that balloons are not only unsafe but are also non-recoverable street litter that inevitably pollutes soil, water bodies, and urban ecosystems.

Citizen organisations have extended strong support to the movement, urging households and apartment complexes to give up balloons and instead adopt eco-friendly decorative alternatives. According to sustainability experts, such alternatives not only reduce waste but also encourage creativity and community participation, especially among children.

Beautiful Bharat, in the list of its awareness activities, pointed out that balloons are single-use, non-recyclable items that often end up in landfills or fragment into microplastics, contaminating soil, air, and water tables. When released, balloons can travel thousands of kilometres, polluting even remote and uninhabited regions. Wildlife is particularly vulnerable, as birds and marine animals often mistake balloon fragments for food, while strings can entangle and injure them. On the human safety front, balloon fragments pose choking hazards for infants, while hydrogen balloons can combust near heat sources. Inhaling helium from burst balloons can cause asphyxiation, and latex balloons may trigger severe allergic reactions, including anaphylactic shock.

Odette Katrak from Beautiful Bharat, who has been spearheading the campaign, said, "I too used balloons 20 years back for family events, never knowing then the damage they caused. But knowing now how lives can be lost, both human or animal, has propelled the urgency of creating awareness through this 'NoBalloonsPlease' campaign. What began in a small way in 2018 with a poster has now grown to a national movement, getting full support from groups, not just in Bengaluru but across cities."

She said that the movement has grown into a collective campaign that not only raises awareness about why balloons should be avoided, but also champions beautiful, vibrant alternatives that are sustainable, livelihood-supporting, and even better when crafted from waste. She added that decorations made from cloth, paper, and flowers can be reused, recycled, or composted, offering a wonderful opportunity for everyone to embrace small changes that make a big difference for the environment.

With similar views, BAF Joint Secretary Valli Srinivasan said, "Bengaluru Apartment Federation (BAF) is aligned with the idea of celebrating festivities without balloons, protecting our lakes, wildlife, and streets from toxic litter and microplastics."

Eco-friendly Republic Day decoration that can be reused, recycled or composted

Collective campaign raises awareness about why balloons should be avoided, pushing for safer alternatives that are sustainable, livelihood-supporting and better for environment

Eco-friendly décor alternatives

- Paper décor made from upcycled materials (using old magazines, newspapers, chart paper etc)
- Decorations using flowers in the colours of the Indian flag
- Cloth fabric buntings stitched in tricolour shades of the Indian flag
- Crochet decorations made using yarn in Indian flag colours

AI cameras to watch over stadium?

With excitement building around RCB matches in Bengaluru, the franchise has pitched for the installation of AI-powered cameras at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium to manage crowd movement during the upcoming IPL season. Ahead of the 19th edition of the league, RCB has urged the Karnataka State Cricket Association to install 300 to 350 advanced AI-based video analytics cameras to help monitor entry, exit and crowd density inside the stadium. RCB has also offered to bear the entire cost of the project, estimated at around Rs 4.5 crore. Sharing the proposal on its X handle, the franchise said the technology would make crowd management more efficient, ease the workload of KSCA officials and police, and significantly improve fan safety by enabling real-time monitoring of spectators entering and leaving the venue. **–BMB**

Minister cracks the whip on smart card deliveries

The Transport Minister has directed all RTOs across the state to ensure that RC and DL smart cards are delivered strictly via Speed Post, with disposal efficiency maintained flawlessly. If cards bounce back because the applicant no longer lives at the listed address, offices must create a separate system to store, track and hand them over.

Officials said that for returned cards, written remarks are now compulsory, and whenever an applicant walks in, RTOs must take their signature on the spot and hand over the pending card. The Minister has slammed the ongoing practice of quietly routing RC/DL cards through driving schools instead of Speed Post, warning that any such violation hereafter will invite direct legal action against the responsible officers. **–BMB**

K'taka drafts law protecting personal choice in marriage

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The Karnataka government has drafted a new law aimed at preventing crimes committed in the name of honour and safeguarding the rights of adults who choose their own partners. The proposed legislation seeks to clearly affirm that personal choice in marriage is a fundamental right and that violence or coercion justified by caste, tradition, community norms or family prestige will not be tolerated.

The draft bill defines 'honour crimes' broadly, covering not just killings but a wide range of actions intended to punish or control individuals for their relationship choices. These include physical assault, threats, harassment, abduction, social and economic boycott, forced rituals meant to humiliate couples, and interference with personal liberty such as confiscating phones or restricting access to finances. Acts like sexual violence, forced medical procedures and public defamation targeting couples or their families are also brought under its scope.

Under the proposed law, honour killings would attract a minimum prison sentence of five years. Causing grievous injury could lead to imprisonment ranging from 10 years to life, along with fines. Lesser forms of physical harm would be punishable with three to five years in jail, while other honour-related offences could result in imprisonment of two to five years and monetary penalties. All offences under the bill are classified as cognisable and non-bailable, allowing the police to take swift action without prior court approval.

The draft legislation reiterates that adults do not require consent from their families, caste groups or community bodies to marry. Couples may, if they choose, inform a magistrate or designated authority about their intention to marry so that protection measures can be initiated, but such notification is voluntary and has no bearing on the validity of the marriage. A women's rights activist welcomed the provision, noting that many couples hesitate to approach authorities out of fear. "The fact that protection can be sought without mandatory disclosure respects privacy while still offering safety to those who need it," she said.

File photo of protest against honour killing and violence

A notable provision addresses situations where consent for a relationship is allegedly obtained through a false promise of marriage in an inter-caste context. If a person later withdraws from the promise solely due to caste considerations, the act may be treated as consent obtained by deception, carrying stringent punishment, including long-term imprisonment. A criminal lawyer observed that this provision attempts to address a long-standing legal grey area. "Courts have often struggled with cases where caste prejudice leads to abandonment. This clause tries to recognise the harm caused when caste bias is the sole reason for backing out," the lawyer said.

The bill also seeks to prevent collective intimidation by banning gatherings intended to condemn, obstruct or interfere with marriages on grounds of honour, caste or tradition. Any attempt by groups or informal bodies to enforce social norms through threats or coercion would be treated as a serious offence.

To ensure safety and support for victims, the draft proposes protective measures such as immediate police intervention, safe shelters, legal assistance, and witness protection.

A social justice advocate said the bill represents a shift from reactive punishment to proactive prevention. "By combining strict penalties with protection, the law acknowledges that honour-based violence is not just a criminal issue but a systemic problem," the activist said.

Forest fire alerts surge in K'taka during first fortnight of the year

Over 1,000 forest fire alerts reported in State early January as dry conditions, seasonal factors, controlled burns, and satellite monitoring reveal rising fire risks statewide

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Ground teams douse flames, upload geo-tagged evidence, and respond swiftly as part of Karnataka's satellite-based forest fire monitoring system

In the first two weeks of the New Year, the number of forest fire incidents in Karnataka has skyrocketed. According to data from the Karnataka Forest Department (KFD), as many as 1,056 fire alerts were recorded between January 1 and January 15. Of these, 679 incidents were reported within forest areas, while 377 alerts pertained to fires in buffer zones. The department said it has responded to nearly 88 per cent of the total alerts received so far.

"The ground-level staff, on receiving an alert, douse the fire, take geo-referenced photographs and upload them on the Fire Alert System along with their feedback. Out of 1,056 alerts so far, 889 fire incidents have already been attended to," said Anil Kumar Ratan, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Forest Resource Management), Karnataka Forest Department.

Data from the Forest Survey of India (FSI) also point to a rising trend. Using spatial information from the Suomi National Polar-orbiting Partnership (SNPP) satellite, the FSI recorded 263 fire alerts in the first two weeks of January this year. In comparison, 209 alerts were reported during the same period in 2025, while 171 alerts were recorded in 2024.

KFD officials attributed the year-on-year variation in fire incidents to weather conditions prevailing just before and during the fire season. They noted that preventive measures such as controlled burning, along with the creation and maintenance of fire lines, can also influence the number of fire alerts recorded in December and January.

The department said several steps are being taken to reduce fire incidents and contain their spread. These include controlled burning in vulnerable forest areas, strengthening and maintaining fire lines, engaging fire watchers, and improving water-harvesting structures to support firefighting efforts.

Ratan said forest fire control cells and circle-level teams are ensuring that every alert is followed up until it reaches frontline staff. Community engagement and awareness programmes are also being conducted to help prevent fires. He added that efforts are underway to further strengthen the satellite-based fire alert system by integrating additional data to improve its usefulness, particularly at the policy level.

Karnataka has witnessed a sharp rise in forest fire alerts this January, prompting intensified ground response, preventive measures, and expanded use of satellite-based systems to curb fires early

Since 2019–20, the KFD has been working with the Karnataka State Remote Sensing Application Centre (KSRSAC), Bengaluru, to operate a satellite-based forest fire alert system. Under this mechanism, fire signals detected by satellites and relayed by the National Remote Sensing Centre, Hyderabad, are processed by KSRSAC. Alerts are generated within half an hour and sent via SMS to forest officials across all levels to enable swift action and prevent the fires from spreading. Officials warned that dry spells and activity could worsen the situation, urging public cooperation, early reporting of fires, and stricter vigilance across vulnerable landscapes during the peak summer months ahead.

New skywalk connects metro station to tech park efficiently

Elevated walkway connects Metro station directly to ITPB and Park Square Mall, reducing traffic congestion, saving time, enhancing commuter safety

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Over 50,000 daily commuters benefit from safer, faster elevated walkway

Metro commuters in Whitefield have received a major boost with the opening of a new high-tech skywalk connecting Pattandur Agrahara Metro Station to the International Tech Park Bengaluru (ITPB) and Park Square Mall. The elevated pedestrian facility is expected to benefit more than 50,000 daily commuters working across over 140 companies located in one of Bengaluru's largest IT hubs.

The skywalk, developed under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) with Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL), cost an estimated ₹30 crore. Measuring around 320 feet in length and rising 24 feet above the road, it allows pedestrians to safely bypass heavy traffic, providing secure access between the Metro station and nearby commercial destinations. Until now, Metro users had to exit the station and walk 200–300 metres at road level, crossing busy junctions and navigating broken, dirty footpaths. The new skywalk directly connects the Metro station to ITPB and Park Square Mall, providing commuters with a safer, faster, and more convenient daily travel alternative.

The elevated walkway is equipped with modern lighting, escalators, and lift facilities, ensuring smooth access for all users, including senior citizens and persons with disabilities. By allowing employees to walk directly from the station into their office premises, the project is expected to significantly reduce commute time and daily travel stress while encouraging greater use of public transport.

Highlighting the project's impact, Clement Jayakumar from the Mahadevpura task force said, "In the IT park, around 50,000 people work, and there is also Park Square Mall. Previously, people had to exit the station and walk 200–300 metres, crossing busy roads with dirty footpaths. Now, the skywalk directly connects the station, benefiting employees and commuters. It is a fantastic initiative enhancing last-mile connectivity and encouraging shift from private to public transport."

He also noted that similar elevated skywalks could have a far greater impact if implemented elsewhere in the city. "If the ORR elevated skywalk connecting to a Metro station gets approved for the Blue Line, it can help 10 lakh commuters," he added. Arun Pai, coordinator of Walkaluru, a GBA pluCitizens initiative focused on improving walkability, stressed the importance of pedestrian-first infrastructure. "The only way to achieve 100% obstacle-free, inclusive, and safe 24x7 pedestrian-first infrastructure for last-mile connectivity at high-footfall Metro stations in major employment hubs is to provide dedicated pedestrian-only walkways that connect directly to destination tech parks," he said.

Drawing global parallels, Pai added that Bengaluru could learn from Bangkok's elevated walkway systems developed in the 1990s to address traffic congestion. He emphasised the urgency of building inter-station elevated walkways along the Outer Ring Road before Metro operations begin, rather than retrofitting later.

He further underscored inclusive urban design, advocating the "8–80 principle," where infrastructure should allow even young children and elderly citizens to walk safely. He urged the government and ORR companies to collaborate and prioritise pedestrian-friendly planning across Bengaluru's major corridors.

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Problems in your area?
Send us a picture along with specific details. And please, no phone calls or spamming

Shoddy work
Residency Road

Freshly repaired tiles outside Bangalore Club on Residency Road have already sunk, revealing substandard workmanship and a clear failure in supervision and quality control.

Road danger
Doddaballapur

A dug-up stretch near a Marvel shop at Anantpura Gate on Doddaballapur Main Road has turned into a crater, posing a significant accident risk to citizens and vehicles.

Lake crisis
Harohalli Lake

For the third time, four dead fish were found floating at Harohalli Lake in North Bengaluru, raising concerns over water quality and pollution.

PICS: KAUSHIK JN

More cameras, stronger crime monitoring

Bengaluru's rapidly expanding CCTV network is emerging as a key crime-control tool, with the number of cameras in the city more than doubling in recent years even as serious offences have remained largely stable. Official data shows the city earlier had 2,32,711 CCTV cameras, which rose to about 5.35 lakh by June 20, 2024, marking an increase of nearly 3.02 lakh cameras, or around 130 percent. All cameras have now been geo-tagged, enabling police to quickly locate footage and track suspect movement across neighbourhoods with greater efficiency.

Police officials say the sharp rise in surveillance has helped deter crimes and solve cases faster, with CCTV footage playing a decisive role in identifying accused persons. Despite a steady rise in population, murder cases have remained at around 200 annually over the last four years, showing no proportional increase. Most killings continue to stem from civil disputes, personal enmity, or family conflicts. Officials argue the expanded CCTV grid has strengthened monitoring, improved response time, and enhanced accountability across the city. –BMB

A worker scales heights on JC Road to fix a CCTV camera, bolstering city's urban surveillance amid ongoing safety drives

B'luru airport overtakes Mumbai in domestic flights

Domestic aviation rankings shift as Bengaluru airport edges past Mumbai, highlighting demand surge, expanded connectivity, infrastructure strains

Daily air traffic movements at Bengaluru airport peak at 837 flights

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Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, has quietly pulled off a significant milestone. In October 2025, the city airport overtook Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport to become India's second busiest airport for domestic travellers. Official domestic flight data shows Bengaluru handling 20,819 domestic air traffic movements during the month, edging past Mumbai's 20,540. The difference of 279 flights may appear slim, but it marks the first time in recent years that Bengaluru has moved ahead of Mumbai on this key metric. Just a month earlier, in September, Mumbai was still ahead with 19,524 domestic flights compared to Bengaluru's 18,884.

> **"On average, the airport handled 765 flight movements a day, underlining the sharp rise in demand for both business and leisure travel from the city**
>
> –Official, Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru

Airport-specific rise

A senior official from the Bengaluru airport said that the airport is likely to continue as the second busiest in the country for domestic travellers, having overtaken Mumbai due to saturation at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport. However, at the city level, Bengaluru would rank third after Mumbai, as the financial capital now operates two airports — Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport and the newly operational Navi Mumbai airport. However, on the international front, Mumbai airport continues to stay well ahead of Bengaluru. Delhi remains the country's largest international gateway with 1,771,129 international passengers, followed by Mumbai at 1,405,591. Bengaluru handled 613,681 international passengers during the same period.

Rising demand

An official from Bengaluru airport said, "The October surge reflects a broader trend of sustained growth at Bengaluru airport through calendar year 2025. Total passenger traffic touched 43.82 million during the year, up eight per cent from 2024. The airport also recorded its highest ever single-day passenger count of 1,37,317 on November 23, while daily air traffic movements peaked at 837 flights on October 19. On average, the airport handled 765 flight movements a day, underlining the sharp rise in demand for both business and leisure travel from the city."

Network push

KIA officials said that the key driver behind the jump has been the steady expansion of routes and airlines. By the end of December 2025, Bengaluru airport was connected to 113 destinations, including 79 domestic and 34 international cities. While Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Pune remained the busiest domestic routes, the airport added new connections to Hindon, Bidar, Jaisalmer, Silchar and Navi Mumbai during the year. International operations also saw strong momentum, with average daily international departures rising from 38 in 2024 to 51 in 2025, translating into nearly 29 per cent growth in international passenger traffic.

Girls most affected as child abductions climb

Child abductions in the state are rising steadily, with police data showing that 9,597 children were kidnapped over the past three years, including 6,891 girls. Of these cases, 1,094 children remain missing, with police unable to trace their whereabouts so far. Girls account for nearly twice as many abductions as boys, intensifying parental anxiety across communities. Many abducted children are forced into begging and forms of exploitation, including bonded labour, sexual abuse, trafficking, and even organ harvesting.

Activists warn that increased social media exposure and inducements by strangers are making children more vulnerable to leaving home. Police say FIRs are registered without delay and measures such as lookout notices, media alerts, border checks, transit-point monitoring, and inter-district searches are undertaken. However, child rights advocates stress stronger training for child protection units, wider publicity of child helpline numbers, sustained awareness campaigns, NGO involvement, and collective social responsibility to curb the menace. –BMB

K-RERA rolls back order aiding homebuyers against errant builders

The Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority (K-RERA) has withdrawn its earlier order that allowed homebuyers to directly transfer RERA decrees against errant builders to civil courts for execution, a move likely to slow enforcement of relief granted to buyers. In a fresh ruling, the authority clarified that homebuyers must first file execution petitions before K-RERA itself, and only thereafter can orders be transferred to civil courts, effectively reversing its previous position.

K-RERA stated that permitting direct transfers to civil courts without initiating execution proceedings before the authority violates Section 38(2) of the RERA Act and goes against principles of natural justice. The authority emphasised that enforcement must originate within RERA's jurisdiction before any further legal steps are taken. A Bench comprising K-RERA chairman K Rakesh Singh and member G Ravindranath Reddy observed that issuing unilateral decree orders without hearing respondents amounts to denial of natural justice. It noted that any order passed without giving builders an opportunity to raise objections would be legally unsustainable and beyond jurisdiction. The Bench further held that orders issued without notice to affected parties cannot withstand legal scrutiny. After reviewing the legal framework, K-RERA concluded that all enforcement proceedings must begin before the authority itself. The decision marks a significant shift from its earlier directive and is expected to impact the speed at which homebuyers can secure relief against defaulting developers. –BMB

Modern mapping reveals longer Karnataka coast

Advanced GIS mapping reveals hidden coastal stretches, expanding Karnataka coastline by 22.6 percent, reshaping planning, maritime security, disaster management strategies

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Revised coastline figures do not alter Coastal Regulation Zone boundaries

Karnataka's coastline has expanded significantly, increasing from 280 km to 343.3 km, a 22.6% rise, after detailed surveys using modern GIS technology and high-resolution data of the High-Water Line revealed previously unaccounted stretches. The update, tabled in Parliament by Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, reflects a nationwide reassessment that raised India's total coastline from 7,516.6 km to 11,098.81 km, a massive 47.7% jump, capturing intricate bays, inlets, and estuaries that were missing in older measurements. The recalculation aims to provide a more accurate baseline for ports, coastal infrastructure, tourism, disaster management, and maritime security.

Sharp rise

Karnataka's 63.3 km addition now puts it among the states seeing substantial revisions, alongside Gujarat, which nearly doubled from 1,214.7 km to 2,340.62 km, and West Bengal, which surged from 157.5 km to 721.02 km, reflecting a staggering 358% increase. Other notable changes include Odisha, rising from 476.4 km to 574.71 km (20.6%), Goa from 160.5 km to 193.95 km (20.9%), and Maharashtra from 652.6 km to 877.97 km (34.5%). Southern neighbours like Kerala saw a modest increase from 569.7 km to 600.15 km (5.3%), while Andhra Pradesh edged up from 973.7 km to 1,053.07 km (8.1%). Smaller territories including Lakshadweep and Puducherry also recorded minor revisions.

Development boost

According to the minister, the recalculated coastline provides better planning tools for developmental activities, such as ports, tourism, and coastal infrastructure, while also enhancing disaster preparedness against cyclones, flooding, and erosion. The data also strengthens India's maritime management and EEZ surveillance, ensuring authorities have precise information to plan coastal and marine security.

CRZ clarified

Importantly, Dr Singh noted that the updated figures do not affect Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) boundaries, which are determined solely by the High Tide Line (HTL) as mapped by the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai. The new measurements simply refine planning and risk assessment frameworks without altering regulatory zones.

Strategic impact

Karnataka's 22.6% increase places it ahead of Goa and just behind Kerala in the southern coastal hierarchy, offering fresh opportunities for economic and maritime projects. Nationally, the reassessment underscores how modern technology can uncover hidden stretches of coast, turning previously underestimated shorelines into key assets for planning, conservation, and security.

According to the minister, the recalculated coastline provides better planning tools for developmental activities, such as ports, tourism, and coastal infrastructure, while also enhancing disaster preparedness against cyclones, flooding, and erosion

With India's total coastline now at 11,098.81 km, the updated data gives both state and central authorities an accurate foundation to develop ports, tourism, and coastal defences while strengthening disaster management strategies—making Karnataka's western shores more prominent than ever.

KSOTAC drops professor after Lokayukta findings

Health department removes KSOTAC member following Lokayukta findings and ongoing departmental inquiry

At last, the Health and Family Welfare Department has removed Dr Sridhar CG, Professor at the Institute of Nephro-Urology, from the Karnataka State Organ Transplant Advisory Committee (KSOTAC), following sustained concerns and adverse findings against him.

The Health and Family Welfare Department constituted KSOTAC on October 3, 2025, to advise the government on organ and kidney transplantation. Dr Sridhar CG was appointed as an in-charge member. However, his inclusion raised questions, as allegations and complaints against him were already on record. In a judgment dated March 3, 2025, the Karnataka Lokayukta stated it was satisfied

After sustained concerns and Lokayukta findings the Karnataka Health Department removed Dr Sridhar CG from KSOTAC after delays amid a departmental inquiry into misconduct allegations

that several respondents, including Dr Sridhar CG, were found guilty. The Lokayukta recommended initiation of disciplinary proceedings under Section 12(3) of the Karnataka Lokayukta Act, 1984, and directed the competent authority under Section 12(4) to report within three months on action taken or proposed.

In November 2025, the government ordered a departmental inquiry headed by Sosale Indudhara, a retired District and Sessions Judge. A senior professor of the Institute of Nephro-Urology, speaking anonymously, said public disclosure of the findings would be unprecedented, alleging the institute has seen decline due to corruption, dereliction of duty, nepotism, and groupism.

Meanwhile, Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, replying to a question by MLC Keshav Prasad N in the Legislative Council on December 15, 2025, said transplant advisory committees have a three-year term and members were included based on recommendations from the institute director, adding steps were later taken to remove those facing Lokayukta investigation.

However, it still took 15 days to remove Dr Sridhar CG from KSOTAC after delays.

— Y Maheswara Reddy

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

State calling

Union minister HD Kumaraswamy, while firmly holding his brief in the Narendra Modi-led NDA government, has once again let it be known that Karnataka politics is never too far from his mind. Keeping a close watch on how the state is being governed, Kumaraswamy says he will return to active state politics whenever people feel the need, insisting the decision is not his alone. With civic body and local elections around the corner, his timing has raised eyebrows, even as he underlines loyalty to the NDA and respect for the responsibilities entrusted to him at the Centre, neatly balancing Delhi duty with a clear ear to the ground back home.

Prayer works

Even as political leadership talks swirl around Rahul Gandhi's Mysuru brief stopover, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and his brother DK Suresh have stirred curiosity on social media with cryptic posters on their X accounts. Shivakumar shared one reading, "Even if the effort fails, the prayer does not fail," while Suresh posted, "The first step to success is effort. Continuous effort leads to achievement." The posters, appearing in the backdrop of separate discussions of DKS and Siddaramaiah with Gandhi, has sparked speculation about leadership messaging. Shivakumar clarified that the quotes are not new, but reflections of experiences he shared with entrepreneurs at a recent event.

Vulture row

A throwaway line on a prime-time reality show has fluttered straight into the forest department's inbox. Members of the Karnataka Vulture Conservation Trust have lodged a complaint with the Ramanagara Deputy Conservator of Forests against actor Kichcha Sudeep for what they call a misleading remark about vultures on Bigg Boss Season 12. During a segment where contestants were matched with animals based on traits, Sudeep described the vulture as one that "lies in wait and strikes at the right moment", a comment conservationists say paints an unfair picture of a critically endangered bird. The trust has urged the actor to issue a clarification on social media, reminding him that a few careless words from a public figure can clip the wings of years of conservation work.

Lift lock

What was meant to be a routine hospital visit turned briefly dramatic in Bidar recently when Food Minister KH Muniyappa, who had flown in from Bengaluru to enquire about the health of ailing former minister Bheemanna Khandre, found himself stuck inside a hospital lift for over 20 minutes, along with former minister H Anjaneya. The lift reportedly stalled soon after it moved from the ground floor of a private hospital, and despite alerts to hospital authorities, help was slow to arrive, triggering murmurs of negligence from those accompanying the leaders. Staff reportedly told supporters the lift was locked and they would have to wait, before a technician finally arrived, fixed the snag and freed the visibly shaken occupants, who stepped out to collective relief.

Pedal power

In a quirky twist on school gifting, students at Cheemangala Government High School in Sidlaghatta Taluk have launched a "Cycle Library" for juniors, turning the tradition of giving presents on its head. Last year, seniors collected money intending to gift their teachers, but after brainstorming, they decided instead to buy bicycles for younger students. With contributions from donors, 25 cycles are now in circulation; 10 bought by students, 5 gifted by teachers, and 10 from local supporters prioritising girls and those most in need. Pupils can borrow a cycle, ride it responsibly, and return it after use, while worn-out bikes are replaced for future donations, making this a model of sustainable, student-led sharing and mobility.

Bar battle

In Peenya's Dasarahalli area, residents turned a planned early-morning bar opening into a fiery protest last week as hundreds of women from Brindavan Nagar Phase-2 staged a sit-in outside the Thippenahalli main road bar. Armed with placards and chants, they blocked the owners from opening, forcing them to retreat. Tensions ran high until police arrived to calm the crowd. Locals said the bar threatened the safety of women and children in the neighbourhood and vowed to continue protests until the bar is permanently shut. **— Sridhar Vivan**

BM SIMPLY PUT

Understanding how EPFO's new UPI-based auto-settlement system helps employees

Funds at your fingertips

What is the new EPF withdrawal system?
From April 2026, Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) subscribers will be able to withdraw their Employees' Provident Fund directly through a UPI-based auto-settlement system, with the money credited to their bank account within three days of applying.

How does the UPI-based EPF withdrawal work?
Subscribers can submit their EPF withdrawal request using the UPI auto-settlement option. Once approved, the amount will be transferred directly to the linked bank account through UPI, without the long processing delays seen earlier.

Why is EPFO introducing this new system?
The move is aimed at cutting delays that plagued the earlier withdrawal process. The UPI-based system is designed to make settlements faster, smoother and more subscriber-friendly, especially during emergencies.

Can subscribers only withdraw money, or also check balances?
Subscribers can not only withdraw EPF amounts but also check pending balances using the UPI-enabled system, making account access simpler and more transparent.

When will this facility be available?
The UPI-based EPF withdrawal facility is scheduled to be available from April 2026, marking a major step towards faster and more efficient provident fund services.

How much of the EPF amount can be withdrawn?
Eligible workers will be allowed to withdraw up to 100 per cent of the admissible amount, including both employee and employer contributions, as per EPF rules.

Who will benefit from this system?
Once fully rolled out, the UPI-based EPF payment system is expected to benefit nearly 8 crore EPFO subscribers across the country. EPFO is currently fixing software-related issues before large-scale implementation.

Is this system safe?
Yes. For funds to be transferred securely from the EPF account to the bank account, subscribers must use their linked UPI PIN. After the money is credited, it can be transferred to another account or withdrawn through an ATM.

Has EPFO tried auto-settlement before?
EPFO first introduced online auto-settlement during the Covid-19 pandemic to help workers meet urgent financial needs. At present, around five lakh EPF claims are settled by EPFO every year.

RCB look to continue winning streak in upcoming match

WPL 2026

On a roll, the Smriti Mandhana-led Royal Challengers Bengaluru will look to extend their winning run when they face Gujarat Giants in the Women's Premier League on Monday.

Unbeaten RCB are the team to beat in the tournament, having registered their fourth consecutive win on Saturday. Gujarat Giants, on the other hand, started on a bright note, winning their first two games before losing the next two to be placed third in the WPL table.

The icing on the cake for RCB is skipper Mandhana's return to form as she struck a match-defining 96 against Delhi Capitals in their emphatic eight-wicket win on Saturday. Opener Grace Harris too has got good starts in the four matches but failed to convert them into big scores, while Georgia Voll too rose to the occasion with an unbeaten 54.

RCB boast of a strong batting line-up in the form of hard-hitting wicket-keeper batter Richa Ghosh, Nadine de Klerk, Gautami Naik and Radha Yadav. While RCB's bowling unit too is a potent force with the likes of Lauren Bell and Sayali Satghare providing the initial impetus, able support is provided from spinners like Shreyanka Patil, Prema Rawat and Yadav.

RCB would also take confidence from their 32-run win over Gujarat Giants in their first face-off this season at Navi Mumbai.

Gujarat Giants, led by Australian Ashleigh Gardner, consists of a formidable batting line-up which includes Australian great Beth Mooney, Sophie Devine, Kanika Ahuja, Gardner, Georgia Wareham and Bharti Fulmali, but in the last two matches they failed to dish out an all-round performance to get over the line.Gujarat Giants's bowling is being led by Renuka Singh, who has failed to impress in the tournament so far. Devine has been Gujarat Giants's stand-out performer with both bat and ball, but the likes of Kashvee Gautam, Gardner and Wareham will need to pitch in with the ball against RCB. — PTI

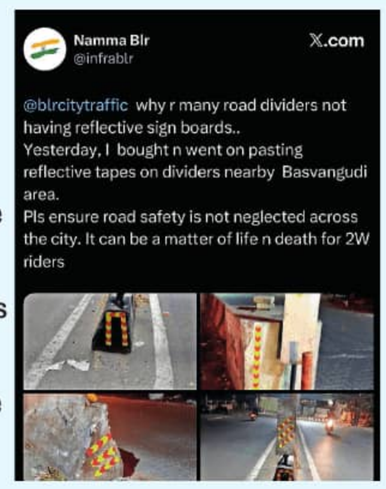
SOCIALTATTLE

That went viral
A social media user highlighted Benniganhalli Metro station as a model for multi-modal integration, praising its bus stop, skywalk, auto and bike stands, coffee shop, and adjoining lake.

Sahana @sahana_srik · 8h
My favorite metro station in Bengaluru by far: Benniganhalli metro station - multi modal integration at its peak. A major bus stop right outside the station, easily accessible sky walk, auto stand, bike stand, coffee shop and as a bonus, a lake right next door!

A platform X user @artoverasters showcased stunning pictures of Mysore Palace, highlighting its royal grandeur and architectural beauty, celebrating its timeless charm.

What's Tweeting
A citizen highlighted road safety concerns, questioning missing reflective boards on dividers and urging authorities to act, after personally pasting reflective tapes to prevent accidents.


Namma Blr
@infrablr
X.com
@blrcitytraffic why r many road dividers not having reflective sign boards..
Yesterday, I bought n went on pasting reflective tapes on dividers nearby Basvangudi area.
Pls ensure road safety is not neglected across the city. It can be a matter of life n death for 2W riders

K'taka to showcase execution readiness at WEF Davos

A Government of Karnataka delegation led by Minister for Large and Medium Industries M B Patil has departed for Davos to participate in the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2026, to be held at Davos-Klosters from January 19 to 23.

Ahead of the visit, Patil said the state's engagement at WEF Davos will be guided by an "execution-first" approach, with a strong emphasis on converting investment intent into on-ground implementation.

During the four-day programme, the delegation will participate in over 45 high-level engagements aimed at accelerating investor decision-making and project grounding in Karnataka.

The delegation is scheduled to meet several global majors, including Amazon Web Services, Lenovo, Vast Space, Coca-Cola, Philip Morris, Imperial College London and the Singapore Economic Development Board, apart from multiple other international investors across manufacturing, renewable energy, electronics and ESDM, data centres and global capability centres (GCCs).

Patil said discussions will focus on presenting Karnataka's strong value proposition and its preparedness to translate investments into reality.

The Karnataka delegation will also host a focused session highlighting investable opportunities across key sectors and the state's ability to support faster project commissioning, Patil added. — PTI

BM FINANCE FUNDAS

Digilogic Systems Ltd IPO to open on Jan 20 with price band at Rs 98 – Rs 104

EYE ON IPO

Digilogic Systems Limited, a city-based automated test equipment systems and application software provider to the defence and aerospace sector, on Saturday announced that its Initial Public Offering (IPO) will open for subscription on January 20.

A press release from the company said the anchor portion will be opened on January 19, and the issue will conclude on January 22. The company intends to raise up to Rs 69.67 crore from the fresh issue and up to Rs 11.33 crore from offer for sale. The company aims to be listed on the BSE SME platform. The price band for the issue has been fixed at Rs 98 - Rs 104 per share, and the lot size will be 1,200 equity shares.

The IPO will comprise a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating up to Rs 69.67 crore and an offer for sale of up to 11.50 lakh equity shares with a face value of Rs 2 each, aggregating up to Rs 11.33 crore, it said.

Indorient Financial Services Ltd is the Book Running Lead Manager, and KFIN Technologies Ltd is the Registrar to the offer.

According to the Red Herring Prospectus (RHP), Digilogic Systems intends to utilise Rs 51.73 crore of the total IPO proceeds for capital expenditure towards setting up of a new facility and Rs 8 crore for pre-payment/re-payment, in part or full, of certain outstanding borrowings availed by the company.

The company plans to use remaining capital towards general corporate purposes and offer related expenses, it added. —PTI

Police trace, reunite missing children in minutes under Bengaluru Safe City Project

Police on Sunday said they carried out a series of swift, technology-enabled rescue operations over the last 12 days in which several missing and unattended children were traced and reunited with their families within minutes under the Bengaluru Safe City Project.

In a press release, police said the operations were carried out through the project and the 'Namma-112' emergency system, which allowed real-time response, GPS-based deployment of patrol vehicles, and coordination between the control room and field staff.

"Coordination between the control room and field personnel played a crucial role in these operations. This response reflects the city's emphasis on modern, technology-driven policing," the statement said.

The police said the first incident was reported on December 27, 2025, under the JP Nagar police station limits, when a mentally unstable woman attempted to take away a two-year-old child. An assistant sub-inspector noticed the incident and alerted 'Namma-112', following which a Hoysala patrol vehicle reached the spot within five minutes, and the child was safely handed over to the mother.

On the same night, under the Chamarajapete police station limits, a 16-year-old mentally challenged boy who had gone missing was traced and reunited with his mother within minutes of receiving the emergency call, the police said.

Subsequent incidents were reported from Bellanduru, Rajagopalanagar, Kadugodi and Kumbalagodu police station limits, where unattended children found alone were traced and escorted back to their families.

Another incident occurred on January 14 near the Hosakerehalli flyover under Girinagar police station limits, where a toddler was found wandering on a busy road. Police said a Hoysala patrol vehicle reached the spot within four minutes, and the child was reunited with the parents after verification.

The police said response times in the incidents ranged from four to 20 minutes, and all the children were safely reunited with their families. —PTI

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personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Kamala Durgaseme Prahlad R/o No.2205, Block-2 Anriya Greenberg Apt, Judicial Lyt, Allalsandra, Yelahanka, B'luru 560064 have changed my name to Kamala Chandrashekar. I shall be called by this name for all purposes

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Hidayatulla** S/O Mohammed Mustafa aged about 51 years Residing at #C/115 Kumbarapete near Jamia masjid Malur town Kolar District 563130. I have change my name from **Heedayath** to **Hidayatulla** for all the purpose sworn before Maruth Vijay, Advocate & Notary, Malur vide affidavit dated: 16/01/2026.

I Kiran R/o No 2, Param, 20th main,A R Layout, Jp Nagar 6th phase, Bangalore-78, Have changed my name to Kiran Krishnamurthy for all the purpose.

I, Disha Mutalikdesai D/o Shrikant R/o # 55, 5th Cross, 1st D main Road, R R Layout, Nagadevanahalli, Bengaluru-560056 have changed my name to Disha Shrikant Mutalikdesai for all purposes.

I, Preethi Pradeep Saklecha W/o Mahaveer Munoth R/o # No 36, 2nd Main , Palace Guttahalli, Malleswaram Bengaluru-560003 have changed my name to Preethi Munoth for all purposes.

I Blessy Samuel Elanjanthramannil W/O, Godsby Johnson R/o House No. 16 , Kanshiram Nagar, Sadguru Layout , Hesaraghatta Road, Bangalore - 560097 , Karnataka, India have changed my name to Blessy Samuel.

I Pannag Nagaraj Shet S/O, Nagaraj Dattatreya Shet R/o N0.16 F1,lakshman Kutir Apts,6th Cross, malleshwaram, Bengaluru-560003 have changed my name to Pannag Shet.

I, Zameer R/O 20 2nd Crs Jayamahal Rd, Nandi Durga Extn, Bengaluru-46 have changed my name to Zameer Pasha for all purposes.

GALLERIA

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KASHMIR WITH TULIP GARDEN 6 DAYS
MARCH: 24, 26, 29, 31 APR: 3, 5, 8, 10, 13, 15
AMRITSAR VAISHNODEVI SRINAGAR 10 DAYS
MAR: 12, 24 APR: 2, 9, 16, 23
CHAR DHAM YATRA 19 DAYS APR: 25 MAY: 1, 6, 9, 12, 16
KASHI/BADRINATH KEDARNATH* 21/14* DAYS
APR: 26 MAY: 1, 3*, 8*, 17, 24* JUNE: 1, 8*, 15, 22*, 24
SIMLA KULLU MANALI/MUSSOORIE NAINITAL* 15/14* DAYS
MAR: 1*, 4, 13*, 18, APR: 1, 2*, 14*, 15
ASSAM MEGHALAYA/ARUNACHAL* 13/19* DAYS
FEB: 13, 20, 27* MAR: 6*, 13*, 20*, 27*

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How contraband travels

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cities contributed smaller numbers. The concentration in Bengaluru highlights the city as the primary hub for narcotics activity.

A senior police official said, "The rise of motorcycles as trafficking tools shows a shift in the modus operandi of offenders; smaller, faster vehicles make detection harder for law enforcement. The city's sprawling roads, traffic congestion, and high population density further facilitate this trend, making policing a complex challenge."

Naveen Kumar, an activist, said it is time to strategise to crack down on these offences. "With Bengaluru contributing nearly one-third of all NDPS FIRs in Karnataka, authorities must adapt strategies to monitor two-wheelers more effectively, focus on high-risk corridors, and enhance urban surveillance.

Bengaluru's two-wheeled narcotics network is a stark reminder that urban mobility can be both a lifeline and a loophole and in this case, it has become a highway for illicit trade," he said.

Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara said that private cars, bikes, and other vehicles used for transporting narcotics have been seized and attached, and reports filed with the courts after being recorded at police stations. "Any suspicious individuals involved in narcotics production are subject to strict action under the NDPS Act, 1985, and all unit officers have been directed accordingly. To curb narcotics trafficking, 6,768 cases were registered in 2023, 4,168 in 2024, and 5,930 in 2025 under the same Act in Karnataka," Parameshwara said.

80% done, 20% in progress

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Transport (NMT) infrastructure, including pedestrian pathways and footpaths, and for the procurement of electric (EV) buses along with the establishment of EV charging stations, contributing to reduced vehicular emissions.

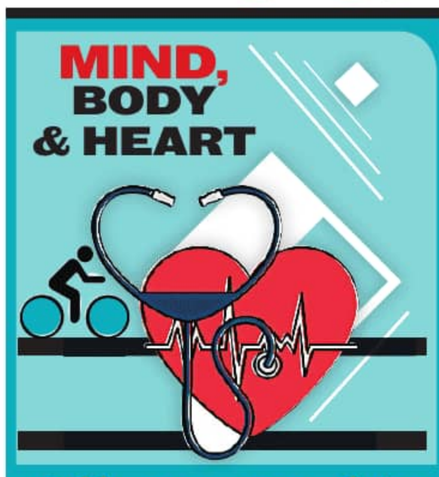
As per EFCC, significant measures, using the fund, were also implemented for construction and demolition (C&D) waste management, including removal of C&D waste from public places, installation of transfer stations, and establishment of a systematic mechanism for the collection and transportation of C&D waste across the city. The remaining 20% of the works are currently in progress and are proposed to be completed at the earliest.

As per the data from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Bengaluru so far has utilised Rs 427.43 crore out of the total Rs 541.1 crore released by the central ministry so far.

While Rs 82.75 crore was utilised in 2025-26, Rs 176.81 crore was utilised in 2024-25 under NCAP, Rs 29.27 crore was put to use in 2023-24, followed by Rs 132.6 crore in 2022-23, and Rs 5.99 crore in 2020-21.

HEALTH TIP: Walking or yoga and a diet rich in broccoli, cabbage and shellfish helps reduce cortisol (stress hormone) level

Drinking enough water to keep your skin firm and elastic, particularly during weight transitions, is critical



All you need to know about...

AI at work

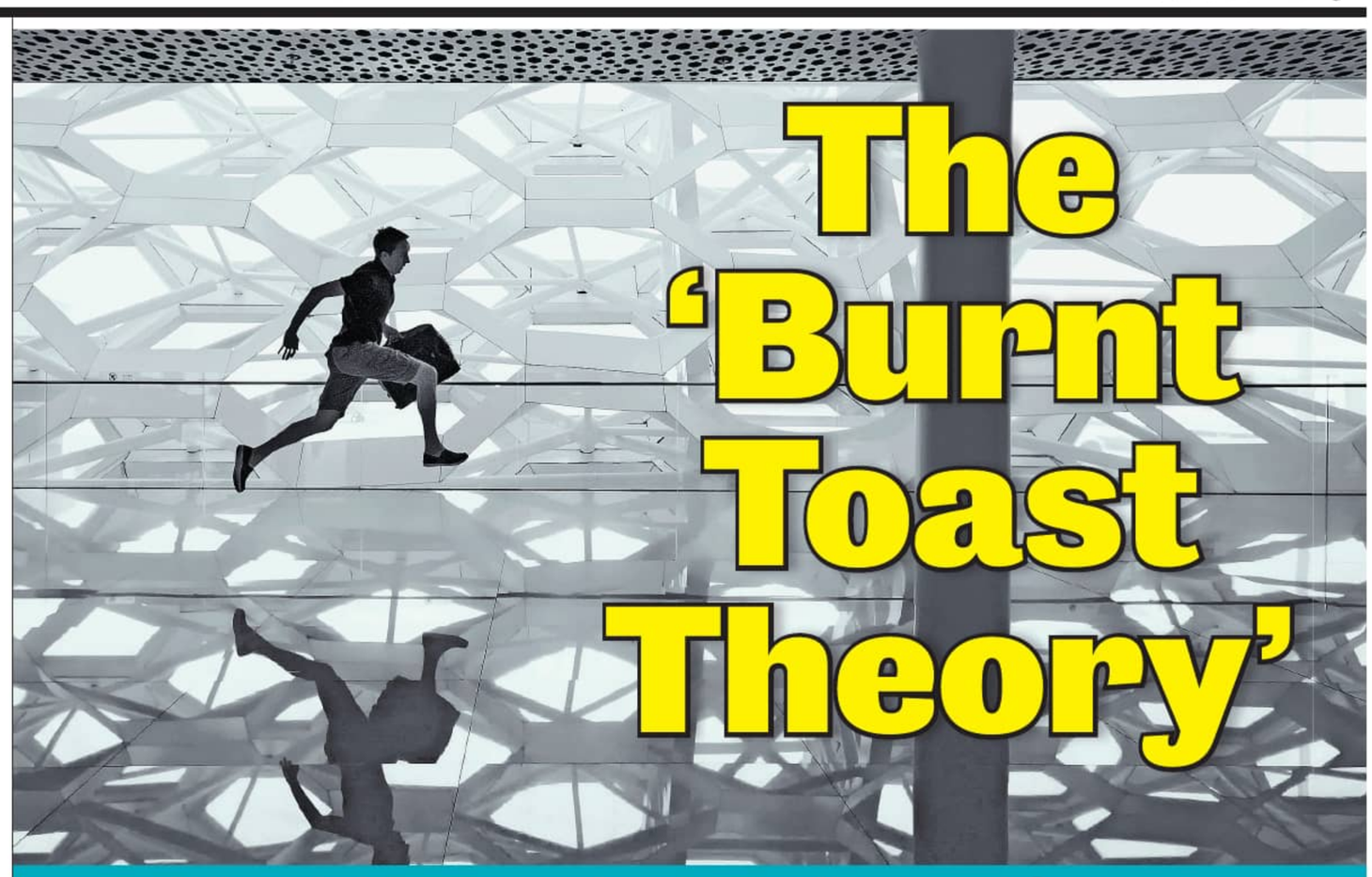
Job roles
Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being adopted at workplaces much faster than companies are training their employees, with many professionals expecting major changes in their job roles in the coming years, according to a new report.

71% expect changes
The study, conducted by Genius HRTech in association with Digipoll, found that 71% of professionals believe their roles and responsibilities will change significantly over the next two to three years as AI tools and new workflows become common.
The report is based on an online survey of 1,704 professionals from different sectors, carried out in November 2025.

Gaps in AI adoption
It highlights a clear gap between the fast pace of AI adoption and the lack of proper training provided by organisations.
According to the findings, 61% of respondents said their companies have not given them adequate guidance on how to use AI effectively.
Only 37% said they had received proper training.
This lack of structured support is shaping how employees view AI adoption in their workplaces.
The report said 55% of professionals feel AI is being adopted out of necessity, while 37% believe it is driven more by trends than actual business needs.
This suggests that many organisations are pushing AI tools without fully preparing their workforce.

Widespread use
About 67% of respondents said they have started using AI tools to simplify or automate their daily tasks, showing how quickly the technology is becoming part of routine work.
The experience, however, has been mixed. While 69% said AI has made their work processes easier, 25% felt it has added complexity.

–IANS



The 'Burnt Toast Theory'

Why delays may be actually good for you

You burn your toast. While making a new slice, you miss your usual bus by thirty seconds. You're annoyed, scrolling through your phone at the stop, when a friend texts you about a job opening. You get the job.

Did burning your toast change your life?

This is the Burnt Toast Theory, and it's become a kind of modern mantra for anyone tired of beating themselves up over small mistakes. The idea: those tiny delays that feel like bad luck might actually be protecting you from something worse, or leading you toward something better.

Here's How It Works

The theory operates on a simple premise: your day is a chain of precisely timed events. Change one link, and everything that follows shifts slightly. You leave five minutes later than planned, so you're not at that intersection when the accident happens. You take a different route because of construction, and you don't cross paths with your ex. You miss your flight, and the stranger you sit next to on the rescheduled one becomes your business partner.

It's about timing and proximity. Every moment you're somewhere, you're also not somewhere else. Every delay removes you from one timeline and places you in another. We notice when things go wrong, but we rarely notice all the things that didn't happen because our schedule got disrupted.

The theory isn't claiming some mystical force is orchestrating your delays. It's acknowledging that in a world of infinite variables, small changes in timing create ripple effects we can't predict or measure. Sometimes those ripples work in your favour.

Why We Need This Right Now

We live in a culture obsessed with optimization. We track our steps, maximize our productivity, schedule our days down to the minute. When something goes wrong, even something small, it feels like failure.

The Burnt Toast Theory pushes back against that. It tells us to relax. You can't control everything, and trying to will make you miserable.

People who can mentally reframe setbacks as potentially beneficial, may show lower stress levels and better problem-solving abilities. They're not delusional, they're just refusing to catastrophize over things they can't change.

The Problem With Perfect Timing

Think about it: if everything always went exactly according to plan, you'd only ever meet the same people, take the same routes, have the same conversations. Every delay is a disruption to your routine, which means it's also an opportunity for something different to happen.

> **We notice when things go wrong, but we rarely notice all the things that didn't happen because our schedule got disrupted**

Reframing delays as neutral events, rather than personal failures, can interrupt anxiety spirals. The question shifts from "why does this always happen to me?" to "what if this is exactly when I'm supposed to arrive?" That shift matters. It turns helpless frustration into curious acceptance.

Don't Take It Too Far

Look, sometimes burnt toast is just burnt toast. Your internet crashes, you miss a deadline, and nothing good comes from it. That's life too.

The theory isn't meant to excuse chronic disorganization or to make you passive about real problems. If you're always late because you don't plan ahead, that's on you.

But for those everyday frustrations, the red lights, the long lines, the unexpected delays, this perspective offers relief. It lets you stop treating every minor setback like a crisis.

How to Actually Use This

Next time something small goes wrong, try this: instead of immediately spiraling into "now everything is ruined," just pause. Take a breath. Notice where you actually are instead of fixating on where you planned to be.

Maybe you strike up a conversation in that longer-than-expected line. Maybe you notice something on the delayed commute that gives you an idea. Maybe nothing happens at all, but you arrive at your destination a little calmer instead of wound up tight.

That's the real point. Not that the universe is secretly orchestrating your burnt toast, but that you get to choose how you respond to it.

The Truth Nobody Wants to Hear

We'll never know about most of our near-misses. You'll never learn about the fender-bender you avoided because you stopped for gas, or the difficult person you didn't meet because you took a different elevator. Life is full of invisible sliding doors, moments where a tiny shift in timing creates a completely different outcome.

The Burnt Toast Theory doesn't claim to know which delays matter; it just suggests that maybe, possibly, they're not all working against you. And honestly? Even if that's not literally true, believing it might be makes you easier to live with. For yourself and everyone else. So burn your toast. Miss your train. Spill your coffee. Then see what happens next. You might be surprised.

– By Nandita Sharma, Femina

MIRRORLIGHTS

Scientists find hidden synapse hotspots in the teen brain: Study

The scientists have discovered that the adolescent brain does more than prune old connections. During the teen years, it actively builds dense new clusters of synapses in specific parts of neurons. These clusters emerge only in adolescence and may help shape higher-level thinking. When the process is disrupted, it could play a role in conditions like schizophrenia.
Adolescence is a defining stage not only for social and physical growth, but also for how the brain develops. During this time, advanced mental abilities such as planning, reasoning, and decision-making continue to mature.
Even so, scientists still lack a complete understanding of how the brain's complex networks are shaped during this critical period. At the heart of brain development are synapses, the functional connections between neurons that allow information to flow through the brain. For decades, researchers believed that synapse numbers steadily rise during childhood and then decline during adolescence.
This idea led to the theory that excessive "synaptic pruning," the process of removing weak or unused connections, could contribute to neuropsychiatric conditions. Schizophrenia that can involve hallucinations, delusions, and disorganised thinking, has often been linked to this mechanism.
A team of scientists from Kyushu University has now uncovered evidence that questions this long-held view. In a study published in Science Advances on January 14, the researchers found that the adolescent brain does not simply eliminate connections. Instead, it also creates new, tightly packed clusters of synapses in specific parts of neurons during this stage of development. "We did not set out to study brain disorders," says Professor Takeshi Imai at Kyushu University's Faculty of Medical Sciences. "After developing a high-resolution tool for synaptic analysis in 2016, we looked at the mouse cerebral cortex out of curiosity and were surprised to discover a previously unknown high-density hotspot of dendritic spines," added Takeshi.

–ANI

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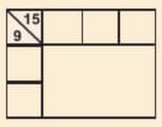
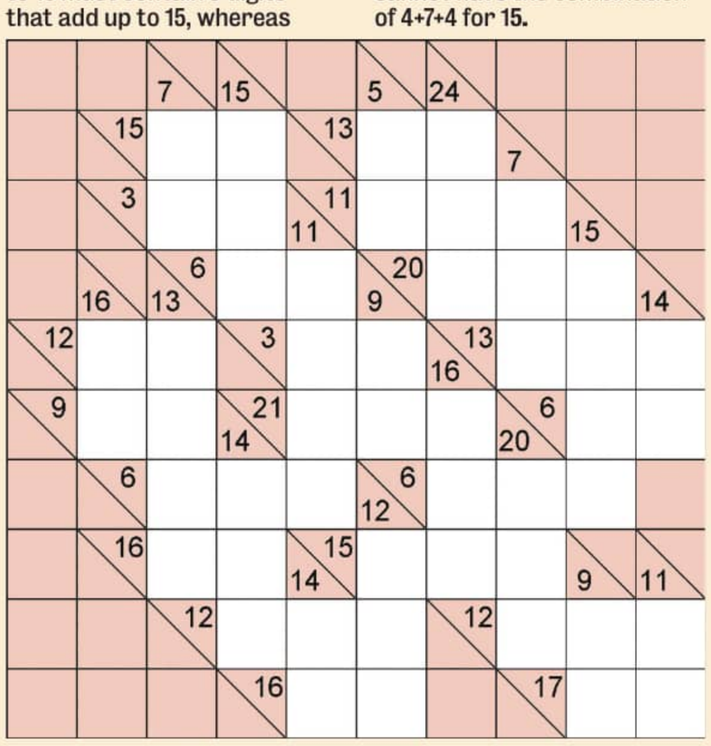
facebook.com/theBangaloremirror
@BangaloreMirror

Kakuro

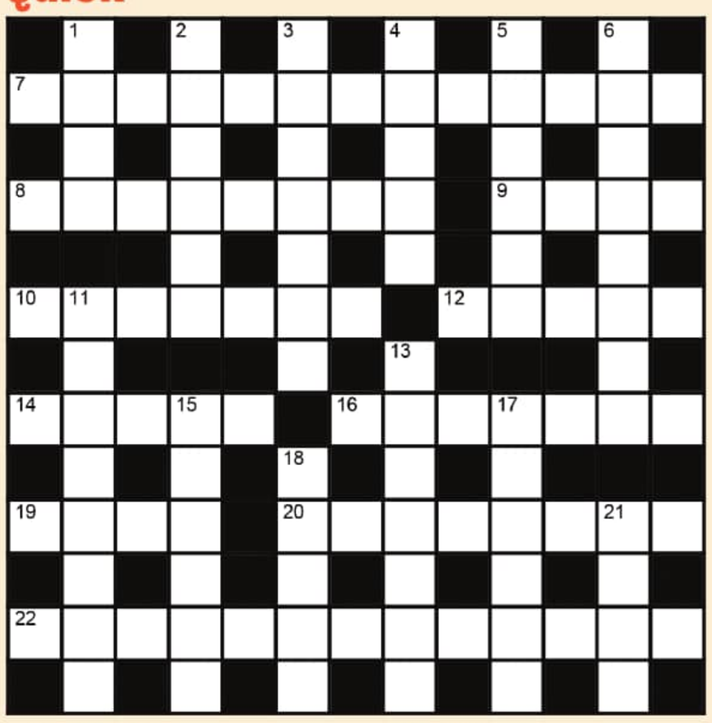
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

7 Denotes a physical disorder largely influenced by emotional state (13)
8 Lingering, being tardy (8)
9 Spanish Surrealist artist (4)
10 Treating badly (7)
12 Broadcasting (2,3)
14 Chatters, gossips or confesses (5)
16 Biggest, most sizable or spacious (7)
19 Merge, blend or combine (4)
20 Went off course (8)
22 Pleading in protest (13)

DOWN

1 Greek peak (4)
2 Frightens (6)
3 Ideas (7)
4 Clear one's throat (5)
5 Tavern workers (6)
6 Bombardments from aeroplanes (3,5)
11 Accepts as true (8)
13 South Indian river–"vary cue" anagram (7)
15 Unsatisfactory state of affairs? (3,3)
17 Shoots from one plant fixed into another (6)
18 Writer of lyric poetry (5)
21 Many millennia (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: Y EQUALS G

NEA LQBAZMXZ DSH WXAL HXN LAN EML DMHW AMNEAZ OXZ SHVNEMHY, XZ SYSMHLN SHVNEMHY. KESN ML ZMYEN EA KMGG OXGGXK.

Linemaro

You stole my heart like the rebels stole death star plans

Mindchow

Men of genius are admired, men of wealth are envied, men of power are feared; but only men of character are trusted

Joke of the day

America is like the really bad flatmate of the world: 'Oh sorry, did I break all your shit? I didn't know it was yours... yeah, I'll replace it sometime... with my stuff.'

Loop

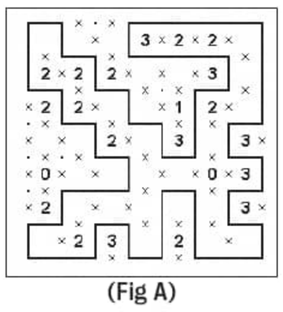
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

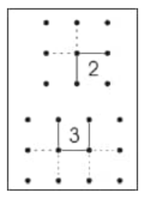
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

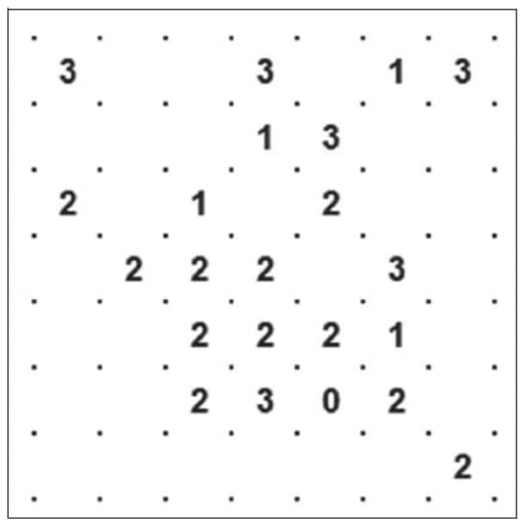
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



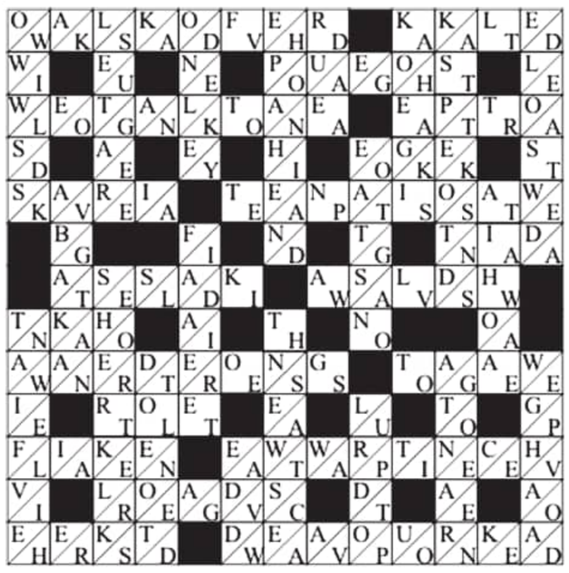
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



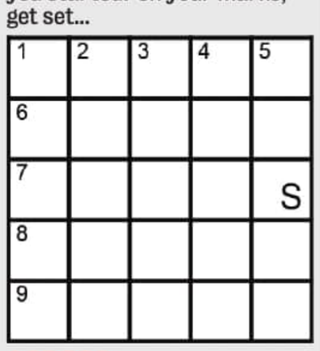
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

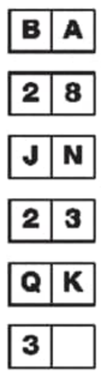
1 Or cha; 6 Or bee; 7 Bye so; 8 Petal; 9 Uglis

DOWN

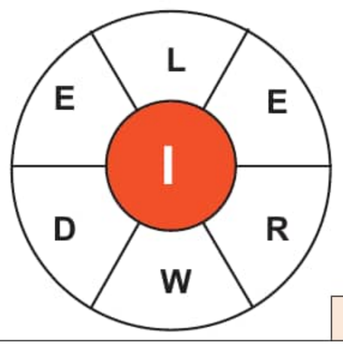
1 I Lobo; 2 Grebe; 3 A rale; 4 Yo cup; 5 Seth's

Mensapuzzle

Which character logically completes this sequence?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

15 Average; **17** Good; **19** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

		4					9	
		3			9			6
	9	5		3	1			2
	8	2	4				3	
	6				5	9	1	
7			3	5		6	4	
9			2			7		
	5					1		

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy

= 4

2 2 9 9

Medium

= 4

2 3 4 6

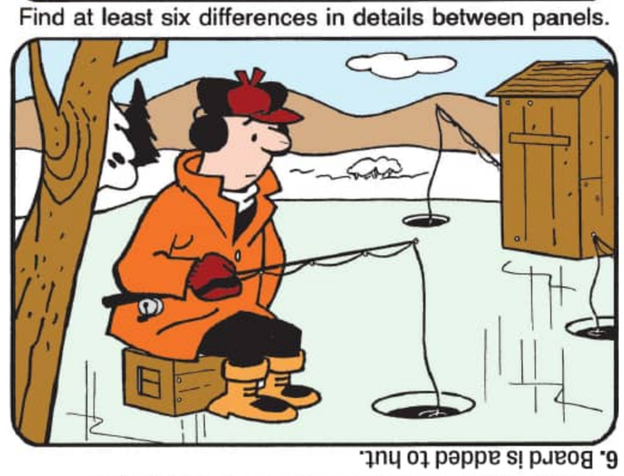
Hard

= 7

4 5 9 7

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



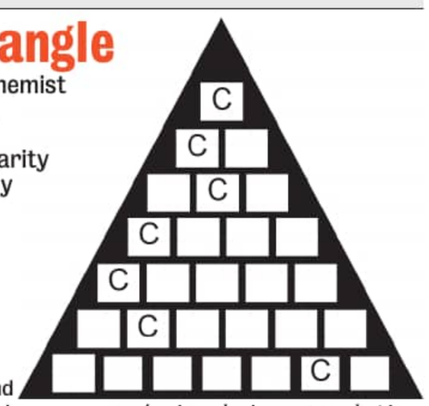
Differences: 1. Fishing line is different. 2. Reel is moved. 3. Box is smaller. 4. Mitten is added. 5. Tree is taller. 6. Board is added to hut.

Riddler

Dark and silent he awaits. His mouths are open wide. He never hunts. He never walks. He never tries to hide. When food arrives, he doesn't blink; His stomach glows like fire. He then throws up what he just ate, Now auburn in attire. What is he?

Alpha triangle

1 Carbon for the chemist
2 Commanding Off.
3 Green prefix
4 Shoreline irregularity
5 Wish for enviously
6 Group of eight
7 Ham it up



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye

YA GOT WELCOMED, OLIVE!
TOSSING COCONUTS AT THEIR NEW QUEEN SEEMS STRANGE!
YA WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO LEARN A LOT OF NEW CUSTOMS!
STAND ON YOUR HEADS!
THE ROYAL KING IS COMING!
4-19
popeye.com

Bizarrotrip

I wasn't going to mention it, but shouldn't that be an elephant?
Wayno & Piraro 10-9-25
©2025 BIZARRO STUDIOS
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Diamond Lil

What kind of animal are you? Take this Internet quiz and find out!
TAP...TAP... TAP...TAP...
I'M A LOON!
YOU'RE PREACHING TO THE CHOIR, HOWARD
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Hart of the city

IF AN ADULT WANTS TO WEAR A COSTUME WHILE CHAPERONING THEIR KIDS, THAT'S UP TO THEM.
SO ARE YOU SAYING YOU CAN'T BE IN COSTUME ON HALLOWEEN NIGHT IF YOU'RE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 12 AND 18?
THAT MAKES NO SENSE! HOW DO YOU PLAN TO ENFORCE THAT?
YEAH!
GO EAGLES!
HEART OF THE CITY © 2025 ANDREWS MCMEEL
GOCOMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

Crankshaft

IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN MEDICAL ADVICE KEEPS CHANGING ALL OF THE TIME!
AT ONE POINT, MY DOCTOR TOLD ME TO TAKE A BABY ASPIRIN EVERY DAY...
AND NOW HE WANTS ME TO WIENER OFF OF THEM!
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BATIUK & DAVIS tombatiuk.com/books

Mutts

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

Dr SUNDEEP KOCHAR

If it's your birthday today

Expect a year of deep self-reflection, spiritual insight, and letting go. Spend quiet time in nature or creative solitude to access profound wisdom. This period of quiet preparation is necessary before a major new cycle begins. By embracing inner peace, you clear the path for a powerful and rewarding personal renewal next year.

Aries Mar 21–Apr 20

Mindful spending strengthens financial comfort. Gentle exercise keeps you balanced. Work requires patience but brings growth. Family support surrounds you warmly. Travel improves when planned well. Property matters progress later. Social interactions bring joy and meaningful connection.

Taurus Apr 21–May 20

New financial ideas inspire action today. Fitness goals strengthen with dedication. Business growth feels encouraging. Family gatherings bring lively happiness. Outings with friends become memorable. Property opportunities emerge positively and align with long-term plans.

Gemini May 21–Jun 21

Financial comfort allows meaningful purchases. Healthy routines energise you. Professional recognition increases confidence. Loving care from family uplifts your spirit. Future travel becomes exciting. Property matters balance smoothly. Invitations connect you with inspiring people and opportunities.

Cancer Jun 22–July 23

Well-being remains steady through mindful choices. New income possibilities appear. Timely work completion earns appreciation. A family achievement brings pride. Travel for work feels beneficial. Property dealings support financial growth. Opportunities continue expanding positively.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

Fresh earnings uplift your confidence. Active routines improve fitness. Favourable deals strengthen finances. Family brings clarity to plans. International travel opportunities unfold. Property ventures offer promising returns. Social settings bring inspiring and enjoyable company.

Virgo Aug 24–Sep 23

Finances strengthen as ideas manifest clearly. Wellness improves with steady discipline. Professional responsibilities highlight your talent. Family support brings comfort. Home changes feel uplifting. Academic growth comes easily. Social appreciation boosts confidence.

Libra Sep 24–Oct 22

A new opportunity increases income. Work progress may feel overlooked yet remains strong. Healthy habits improve vitality. Family cooperation grows gradually. Travel enriches your experience. Property issues resolve smoothly. Academic improvement strengthens motivation.

Scorpio Oct 23–Nov 22

Thoughtful budgeting enhances stability. Health routines bring encouraging results. Workplace decisions reflect your strength. Home events spark joy. Travel abroad becomes possible. Property options appear favourable. Social interest increases as your influence grows.

Sagittarius Nov 23–Dec 22

Financial comfort supports your desires. Wellness improves through conscious choices. Manage tasks wisely to avoid overload. A positive attitude brightens home life. Travel unfolds seamlessly. Property planning gains support. Stability strengthens future goals.

Capricorn Dec 23–Jan 20

Long-awaited payments arrive comfortably. Healthy eating boosts vitality. Business progress becomes rewarding. Family time brings warmth. Outings refresh your mood. Property opportunities appear strong. Friendly visits brighten your day beautifully.

Aquarius Jan 21–Feb 19

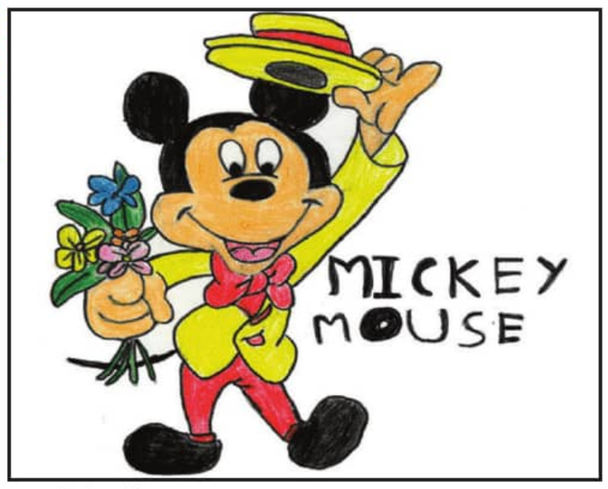
Finances feel steady and supportive. Wellness improves through routine. Work challenges encourage growth. Provide emotional presence for loved ones. Property investments bring confidence. Everything aligns smoothly today, helping you feel grounded and optimistic.

Pisces Feb 20–Mar 20

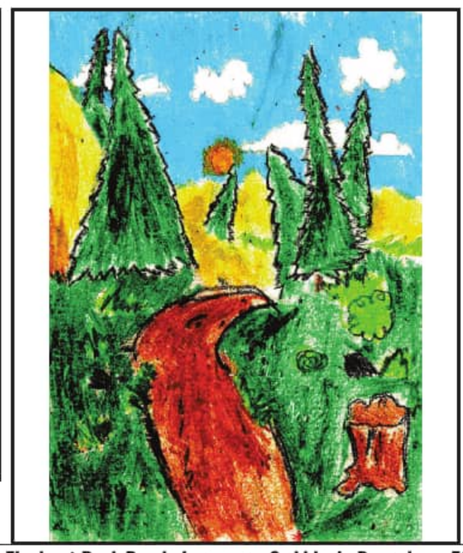
Healthy habits enhance your energy. Financial improvements ease stress. Professional appreciation strengthens confidence. Family surprises warm your heart. Travel adds excitement. Property dealings bring success. Joyful social interactions surround you with genuine support.

www.sundeepkochar.com

KIDZONE



Aayush, Bengaluru



Ananth, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

QUOTE UNCODE

The superior man does not set his mind either for anything, or against anything. What is right he will follow.

SOLVE IN 1M

[((16^2) / -2] + 28
(-128+28)
-100

BULL'S EYE

dell, dire, elder, idle, idler, lied, relied, ride, rile, weird, wide, wider, wield, WIELDER, wild, wilder, wile, wire, wired

FAST FIVE

O	R	A	C	H
B	E	R	O	E
O	B	E	Y	S
L	E	A	P	T
I	G	L	U	S

STRIKE OUT

WALKOVER
LETTAL ONE
VLOUGHT
LIENATPING
EROE ESS OGE
WARDRES O
TKO I TN
ASSAI WALSH
BFN GTAD
SARI TANAIST E
DEY I EKE T
LETALONE ATTA
IUNOUGHT L
VLOVERKALE

QUICK

PSYCHOSOMATIC
SAREYING
RROMIRO
VJ
MELD EVIED
I A
BLABS LARGEST
E
ABUSING ONAIR
EA
TARRYING
SA
PUT NICK

MENSA PUZZLE

3. The two digit numbers in alternate boxes represent the sum of the alphabetical value of the left hand letter in the box above and the reverse alphabetical value of the right hand letter.

RIDDLER Toaster

SUDOKU

6	7	4	5	8	2	9	3	1
2	1	3	7	4	9	8	5	6
8	9	5	6	3	1	4	7	2
1	8	2	4	9	6	5	3	7
5	4	9	1	7	3	2	6	8
3	6	7	8	2	5	9	1	4
7	2	1	3	5	8	6	4	9
9	3	6	2	1	4	7	8	5
4	5	8	9	6	7	1	2	3

ALPHA TRIANGLE

C, CO, Eco, Cove, Covet, Octave, Overact.

GO FIGURE

Easy
2 - 9 + 9 + 2 = 4
Medium
3 x 4 - 2 - 6 = 4
Hard
9 - 4 / 5 x 7 = 7

LOOP

KAKURO

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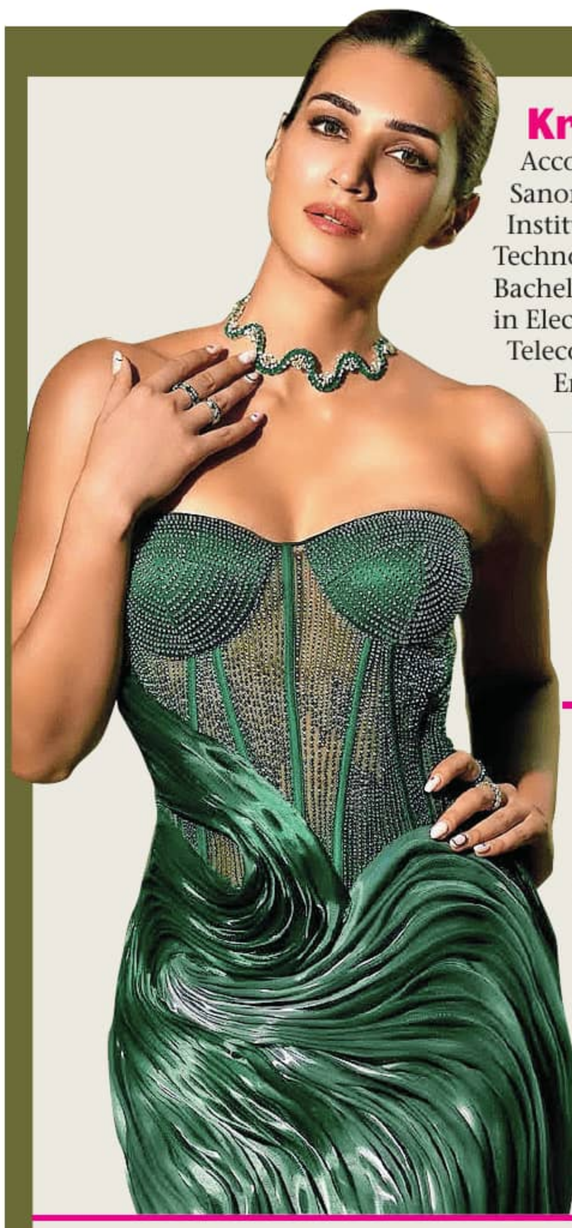
 # Conspiracy theory
Govinda breaks his silence on rumours about rift with wife Sunita, says family members being "used" in "big conspiracy"

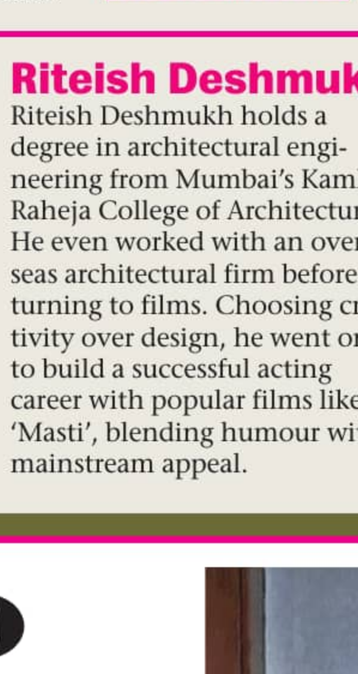
Engineering a cinema career

Celebrities who left the field of engineering to pursue Bollywood dreams



Kriti Sanon
According to Zee News, Kriti Sanon graduated from Jaypee Institute of Information and Technology (Noida) with a Bachelor of Technology degree in Electronics & Telecommunication Engineering. Kriti had great grades; however, she opted to focus on becoming an actor instead. Kriti's first film was 'Heropanti,' in which she had great success and continues to act across multiple genres of film.

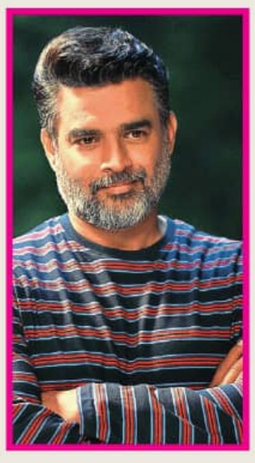
Kartik Aaryan
Coming from a family of doctors, Kartik Aaryan pursued biotechnology engineering in Navi Mumbai. While attending college, he actively chased acting opportunities and even enrolled in acting workshops. His persistence eventually led to a breakthrough with 'Pyaar Ka Punchnama', proving that balancing academics and ambition can sometimes lead to unexpected success.



Taapsee Pannu
Taapsee Pannu earned a degree in Computer Science Engineering from Guru Tegh Bahadur Institute of Technology in New Delhi and even worked as a software engineer. However, her interest in performance led her to audition for television. She eventually entered films with her Telugu debut 'Jhummandi Naadam', carving a strong niche for herself across industries.

Sushant Singh Rajput
Late actor, Sushant Singh Rajput enrolled in mechanical engineering at Delhi College of Engineering but eventually dropped out to pursue theatre in Mumbai. A brilliant student with a deep interest in astrophysics, he once aspired to become an astronaut. His passion for acting led to acclaimed performances in films like 'Kai Po Che!', leaving a lasting legacy.

R Madhavan
R Madhavan completed his education in electronics after studying in Jamshedpur and Kolhapur. He even represented India as a cultural ambassador in Canada before returning to finish his degree. Acting, however, became his true calling. Over the years, films like 'Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein' showcased his seamless transition from academics to stardom.



Ameesha Patel
Ameesha Patel studied biogenetic engineering at Tufts University in Boston before switching her major to economics. Despite her academic pursuits abroad, she found herself drawn to the world of cinema. Her Bollywood debut in 'Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai' turned her into an overnight sensation, redefining her professional journey completely.

Riteish Deshmukh
Riteish Deshmukh holds a degree in architectural engineering from Mumbai's Kamla Raheja College of Architecture. He even worked with an overseas architectural firm before turning to films. Choosing creativity over design, he went on to build a successful acting career with popular films like 'Masti', blending humour with mainstream appeal.

Love in Tokyo

Actor Allu Arjun was spotted greeting his fans in Japan following the release of his film "Pushpa 2: The Rule" in the country.

In the videos circulating online, the actor, dressed in a dark coloured attire, is seen interacting with his fans, who try to capture glimpses of the event on their mobiles, with some extending their hands for a handshake.

Directed by Sukumar, the film originally released in December 2024 and was a sequel to the 2021 film. Produced under Mythri Movie Makers, the film also starred Rashmika Mandanna and Fahadh Faasil.

It revolved around Arjun's character, a labourer-turned-sandalwood smuggler, Pushpa Raj, with Mandanna as Srivalli and Faasil as SP Bhanwar Singh Shekhawat.

The film was released in Japan on Friday.

Mandanna also shared pictures on her Instagram as she received letters from the fans and penned a note thanking for the gifts she received.

So I was in Japan for a day and all the love I received there in just one day was so so sooooo wholesome!!! So many letters and so many gifts and I read them all and I got back home all the gifts and I can't tell you how emotional I became seeing all of this," she wrote. **–PTI**

SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Social thriller about AI

Anil Shetty, an activist and politician, is set to debut in Sandalwood with Lambodhara 2.0. The movie, billed as a AI-based social thriller, is to be helmed by Simple Suni. Regular filming of the movie is expected to start in a few days. Bollywood actress Saachi Bindra has been roped in as the female lead. The movie, to be produced under the MASS Production banner, explores themes of artificial intelligence, and the ever-evolving digital ecosystem.

"This is a completely original story inspired by the lives of today's youth in the digital age. The film follows the journey of a young man from Bengaluru and gradually unfolds the conflict between the real world and the digital world, layer by layer," said Simple Suni.

Saachi Bindra said what excited her about Lambodhara 2.0 was how relevant and emotionally grounded the story is. The makers have also revealed that MASS Production is in advanced discussions with a well-known Bollywood actor for a pivotal role in the film.

Standing guard

The trailer of the much-awaited Chowkidar was unveiled a few days ago at Kalavidara Sangha. The function was graced by Jayanagar Police Inspector Raghavendra Gowda and High Court advocate Praveen. The movie, scheduled for release on January 30, is helmed by Chandrasekhar Bandiyappa, a practising High Court advocate. Pruthvi Ambaar and Dhanya Ramkumar are the lead pair while veteran actor Saikumar plays a pivotal role.

Gowda said soldiers guard the country's border and police ensure law and order within the country. "Father becomes a guard for his family. The movie has a good story. I remembered my parents while watching its trailer," he said.

Praveen said the quality of the trailer showcases the hard work and dedication of the team members. "A movie is a dream of a director but the producer considers it as his child. Director Chandrasekhar Bandiyappa is an intelligent person. Producer Kallahalli Chandrasekhar facilitated the shoot," he said.